

JOIN program's secrets to 100% GED® success

During academic year 2012-13, 68 clients enrolled in JOIN's GED® preparation program. Of the 39 students who persisted in the program, every one of them earned a GED Certificate — an astounding pass rate! How did they do that?

"It's a combination of factors," said GED instructor Augusta Hinton (shown at left). "Clients meet with a case manager and go over short- and long-term goals and if they are interested in getting a GED, they make the commitment to attend class either five mornings and/or four afternoons a week." There are typically a dozen students working at any one time in this open-entry program.

Augusta uses Learning Unlimited as an initial assessment. "It has been around for many years, and it can tell me specifically what the client needs to review. For example, if a student knows how to solve equations but does not remember how to work with fractions, this assessment will tell me. It is simple and to the point."

Students are assigned a series of levels to complete. Students work independently on hard-copy worksheets, with Augusta guiding them along, sometimes supplementing with the Steck-Vaughn math skills and English skills workbooks. Students move on when they have successfully completed the worksheets with a minimum of 80% correct.

"Once a student finishes the levels, I give the Steck-Vaughn GED practice test. The results tell me if the student is ready to take the GED test or needs further study in certain subjects. I am then able to give the student an individualized plan that will hone in on any weaknesses. This may consist of Steck-Vaughn GED prep materials, Khan Academy videos, researching vocabulary, and/or writing various essays. When those assignments are complete, another GED practice test is given. If the scores are high enough, the case manager sits with the student, discusses how to prepare for test day, and helps the student register to take the test at Western Nevada College's Testing Center."

Students take a computer/clerical assessment designed by Instructor Alisa Johnson (shown at right) on www.Testmoz.com. Most clients need computer training and again they work independently, this time guided by Alisa. Coverage is broad and includes PC literacy, Microsoft Office Suite, and QuickBooks for those who are assessed to need it.

Looking ahead

JOIN is preparing for the new computer-based GED Test (set to launch January 2, 2014). "I am adding some new components to the lab resources," said Augusta. "I've put some of the reading materials on the computer so students will need to read them electronically instead of in book form. Reading on the computer is like training a muscle; it takes practice!" The content preparation will be similar, with a little more emphasis on vocabulary building for social studies and science.

Alisa has created a workbook with screenshots for students to work through electronically. "This computer training may take a day or two," she said, adding, "We plan on getting iPathways, the web-based GED prep curriculum."

If past results are any indication of future success, we're likely to see many more Nevadans earn their GEDs, thanks to Augusta, Alicia, and the entire JOIN team, reachable at 775/283-0125.

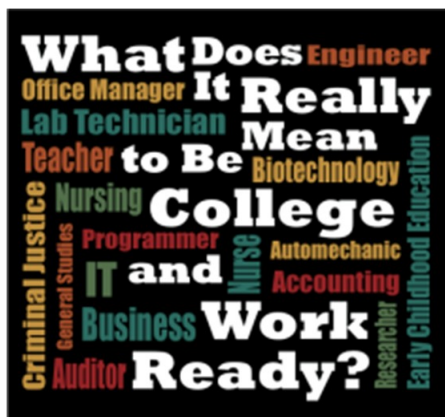
**Keys to success:**

- ✓ **Students commit, persist, and are able to work independently**
- ✓ **Case managers hold clients accountable for attendance**
- ✓ **Instructors closely monitor progress and provide "just-in-time" assistance**
- ✓ **WIA (Workforce Investment Act) funding through Nevadaworks helps alleviate barriers to education and training**

JOIN, Inc. is a private, 501c3 nonprofit workforce training organization that receives funding provided by Nevadaworks through a competitive grant under the Workforce Investment Act. JOIN is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program.

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Report documents troubling issues



In May 2013 the [National Center on Education and the Economy](#) (NCEE) released *What Does It Really Mean to Be College and Work Ready?* — two [reports](#) on first-year community college students, one on English literacy and one on mathematics.

In conducting this study, NCEE randomly selected one community college from each of seven states and focused on the most popular and diverse programs in those colleges: accounting, automotive technology, biotech/electrical technology, business, criminal justice, early childhood education, information technology/computer programming, nursing, and the general education track. The reports offer an analysis of the mathematics and English literacy skills demanded of the typical first-year student in a range of required community college introductory courses in the nine programs that were focused upon, based on data from textbooks, tests, and student work.

For mathematics, the study concludes that “a substantial part of the high school mathematics we teach is mathematics that most students do not need, some of what is needed in the first year of community college is not taught in our schools, and the mathematics that is most needed by our community college students is actually elementary and middle school mathematics that is not learned well enough by many to enable them to succeed in community college.”

For English literacy, the report notes that “only modest reading and writing demands are placed on students in these courses. While texts assigned include content at about an 11th or 12th grade reading level, which is significantly more

challenging than what they typically encounter in high school, the level of processing of those texts required by the assigned tasks is, at best, only modestly challenging in most courses.” Aside from English Composition, few classes require students to reflect meaningfully and to analyze what they read. When writing is required, the tasks are typically not challenging, and the expectations of instructors for grammatical accuracy, diction, clarity of expression, reasoning, and forming logical arguments tend to be quite low.

The report concludes, “The issues revealed by this study are clearly not limited to the low standards for mathematics and English literacy in our high schools. There is a striking mismatch between the kind of literacy skills demanded for success in college and careers and the curriculum in our schools. Some of this mismatch is addressed by the new Common Core State Standards. As such, the standards represent a promising first step in righting this ship, but their faithful implementation will likely be a heavy lift for our schools, and even if successfully executed, offer no guarantee of fully addressing the many shortcomings identified by this study. Parallel initiatives on the community college front are also in order as is a commitment to build on this initial research to deepen our understanding of the issues at hand and to track the results of the most promising efforts that may be mounted to address the shortcomings identified here.

“This report will be jarring for many. Our findings paint a very different picture of the actual standards for success in our community colleges than many have been carrying around in their heads. While we are confident that our research techniques have enabled us to produce a much more accurate picture of those standards than the nation has ever had before, we do not regard this report as the last word on the subject.”

Access the reports and Executive Summary at <http://nvae.us/92>.

Helping students understand and use health insurance in 2014

Participants in the Collaborative on Health Literacy and Access, Health Care Coverage, and Care of the Institute of Medicine Roundtable on Health Literacy have prepared a [discussion paper](#) that presents basic information that can be used to help people understand their health insurance options. The paper is a resource for those who will be helping consumers make important decisions — for patient navigators, community organizations, employers, media, educators, and any individual or organization working to improve understanding of options for health insurance. Download from <http://nvae.us/93>.



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Internet use in America: where, why, and how?

In June 2013, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) released [Exploring the Digital Nation: America's Emerging Online Experience](#). The Economics and Statistics Administration (ESA) co-authored the report, which is based on the U.S. Census Bureau's July 2011 [Current Population Survey, Computer and Internet Use Supplement](#) and includes information collected from 53,500 households.

Report data reveal dramatic growth in the number of Americans going online and the extent to which they depend on the Internet to engage in a wide range of activities, such as applying for jobs, looking up health information, and civic engagement.

The report indicates 72.4 percent of American households (88 million households) have high-speed Internet. While most Americans still use a desktop or laptop computer to go online, mobile device use has grown significantly. Further, almost all home Internet use came via a broadband connection.

Digital service adoption rates varied by location. Urban households have higher rates of computer ownership and broadband adoption than rural areas. White, Asian-American, high-income, and highly educated households also had higher rates of ownership and adoption rates compared to rural African-American and Hispanic households.

Despite an increase in the overall percentage of Americans who use the Internet and the fact that 90 percent of Americans live in areas where high-speed Internet is available, only about seven out of 10 American households are now online at home. About half of the households that chose to not have home Internet connections said it was due to a lack of affordability and inadequate computing equipment.

Households with school-age children were more likely than those without children to own a computer and to adopt broadband. Ninety-two percent of people who accessed the Internet did so from home with the remaining Internet users going online at public libraries, workplaces, school, other people's houses, cafés, and community centers.

The report shows that widespread Internet use benefits society. Even so, approximately 30 percent of the 119 million households represented in the Current Population Survey did not use the Internet at home, which contributed to the persistence of a "digital divide." In light of that, an ongoing focus of the CPS data collections in the Digital Nation series will be to examine households that do not have broadband Internet service to assess why they do not. Broadband adoption is seen as key to ensuring that all Americans can take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the digital economy. Access the report at <http://nvaе.us/94>.

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www.glasbergen.com



"More and more patients are going to the Internet for medical advice. To keep my practice going, I changed my name to Dr. Google."

Teachers' roles are changing



Swedish telecommunications giant Ericsson recently posted the intriguing 20-minute video "The Future of Learning in a Networked Society" (<http://nvaе.us/8y>). It taps some of the leading minds in education and technology to examine how technology is changing the way kids learn.

"We're probably at the death of education, right now," observed Stephen Heppell, a professor at Bournemouth University who is regarded as one of the most influential academics in educational technology. "I think the structures and strictures of school — learning from 9 until 3, working on your own, not working with others — I think that's dead or dying. And I think that learning is just beginning."

The Internet has opened up information to everyone. And it's this that some argue has led the whole education system to a massive crossroads, suggesting a fundamental shift in the role a teacher plays — more like a guide than a dispenser of information.

"Knowing something is probably an obsolete idea," said Sugata Mitra, professor of Educational Technology at Newcastle University. "You don't actually need to know anything, you can find out at the point you need to know it. It's the teacher's job to point young minds towards the right kinds of questions. The teacher doesn't need to give any answers, the answers are everywhere. And we know now from years of measurements that learners who find the answers for themselves retain it better than if they're told the answer."

**Revolutions destroy the perfect,
then enable the impossible.**
—Seth Godin, entrepreneur and author

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This professional development project is a leadership activity funded by a grant from the Nevada State Department of Education, Workforce Investment Act, Title II (Adult Education and Family Literacy). There is no discrimination or denial of participation on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion or religious creed, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, or disability.

Nevada Manufacturing Day is October 4



Dream It Do It Nevada is coordinating the 2013 Nevada Manufacturing Day, which will coincide with the Manufacturing Institute's [National Manufacturing Day](#) initiative. Dozens of Nevada manufacturers have already signed up to participate in activities that will open the eyes of our community to the exciting opportunities available throughout the state.

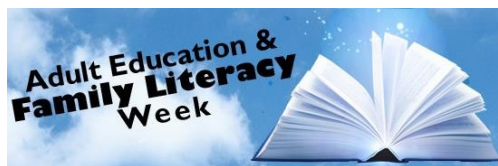
Manufacturing Day is designed to expand knowledge about and improve general public perception of manufacturing careers and manufacturing's value to the U.S. economy. Students, parents, educators, media, customers, suppliers, and the community at large come together to learn about career opportunities, training, and resources. In addition, manufacturers will learn about business improvement resources and services delivered through manufacturing extension partnerships.

If your school is interested in participating in these educational tours, having manufacturers come to speak with your students, or being involved in any other way, contact www.dreamitdoitnevada.com, 775/342-5308, jbegley@dreamitdoitnevada.com.

Dream It Do It Nevada, a collaboration of industry, education, economic development, workforce development, and political/civic leaders, is the non-profit engine leading Nevadans to competitive careers in industry.

Special week ahead

**Adult Education and Family Literacy Week:
September 23-29**



[Wonderopolis](#)[®] enhanced

The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) recently re-launched www.wonderopolis.org to optimize learning in and out of the classroom. Features include alignment to Common Core State Standards, text-to-speech technology, quizzes, mobile improvements, and integrated social elements. The site's Wonder of the Day[®] provides learning moments for everyday life.